Vol. CXLIV. No. 1879.

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THE BYSTANDER December 20, 1939

The BYSTANDER

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The Bystander

Tunbridge

Howard Coster Takes a Picture

Hovering in the background of this picture is Howard Coster, whose portraits have appeared regularly in the "Bystander" for four years. He is off his beaten track in the drama: self-styled a "photographer of men" it was his ambition from the start to take the great, "evil and good," and now a place in his studio window in Essex Street is as good a criterion of fame as most. King George V. presides there permanently, Ambassadors, Cabinet Ministers, and the lords of science, art and commerce come and go. Born Ventnor, I.O.W., 1885, Coster started his craft in South Africa by travelling round to photograph rich Boers. His forthright manner to all sitters hasn't changed since then (he is said to have told a bishop: "For God's sake look bright!"). His subject here is Alan Judd and Sylvia Coleridge rehearsing for *The Venetians* at the Torch Theatre in Knightsbridge. This tiny outpost of drama has been lightening Belgravia's black-out with Clifford Bax's sensitive Renaissance piece for two weeks now; and, particularly, Sylvia Coleridge's performance should not be missed

The Passing Hour

Wartime Comments and Asides

By A. G. Macdonell

THE whole world is watching with horror the tragedy of the Finns, except, of course, the masses in Russia who know nothing about it, the Nazis, and the sycophantic, miserable Bulgarians, who have openly approved the Russian attack, simply in order to toady to Moscow with an eye on territorial gains in the Balkans. The Finns are putting up a heroic resistance, but weight is bound to tell in the end unless help from outside speedily reaches Finland. But where is that help to come from?

FANTASTIC stories, of course, are circulating about Italian aeroplanes flying to Finland and a supply of German weapons dashing across the Baltic to Helsinki. Whether or not these rumours are true, the interesting thing about them is that they should ever have been started. It is only worth while starting a rumour if there is a reasonable chance of it being believed. And it is significant that German-Russian relations are such that it is possible that Berlin is unwilling to see Finland overrun. At any rate, the Kremlin thought it worth while to demand a categorical denial from the Nazi Foreign Office.

THE Swedes and the Norwegians are being moved more and more towards active hostility against Russia, but a terrible responsibility lies before their Governments. To remain neutral may mean that Sweden will be the next victim, whereas to take sides against Russia may provoke an instantaneous attack from Germany, desperately anxious to preserve its supply of iron-ore from northern Sweden. The whole position of Scandinavia is quite appalling. For a hundred years Scandinavia has been a solid block of pacific neighbourliness. Now it is threatened by the hordes of darkness.

IN the meanwhile the best laugh of the week comes from M. Molotoff, who protested officially to Great Britain that our blockade "violates the rights and interests of neutral countries, and also violates the provisions of international law."

AS I write these words, it is announced that the B.E.F. is in action on the Western Front, and so the wheel has turned the full circle. It is a quarter of a century after the first B.E.F. came into action at Mons. Their sons are now continuing the war. For, after all, this is simply a continuance of the age-long struggle against barbarism.

THE country is still in a muddle over the "save or spend" controversy. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has urged us to save for victory, and Sir Samuel Hoare has begged us to spend to keep industry going. No one has yet resolved the dilemma for us. A particular case in point is that of the motorist. At the end of this year, motor-licences go up from fifteen to twenty-five shillings per horse-power. Petrol has gone up in price, and rationing has reduced the running of each car to about one-sixth of its normal requirements. Is it the patriotic duty of the motorist to lay up his car and save petrol for the nation? Or ought he to contribute his horse-power tax and his petrol tax, even though he is running his car on an uneconomic basis? In other words, does the Government want the petrol or the cash?

MR. GEOFFREY SHAKESPEARE, Under-Secretary for the Admiralty, told the House of Commons the other day that the Admiralty Department of Scientific Research carries out in this war the functions of the Board of Invention in the last war. Let us hope that it carries them out a little more efficiently. You may remember that Mr. Philip Guedalla described the Board of Invention as "a party of old gentlemen sitting in Cockspur Street waiting, like an inverted Mr. Micawber, for something to turn down."

THERE was a remarkable example a few days ago of German propaganda methods, and how effective they are occasionally. The German wireless broadcast a statement in English that all letters from the B.E.F. were being held up in this country and being sent to the Censor's office in Liverpool for examination before being allowed to go to France. This story was enthusiastically taken up by a London daily paper, and caused a great deal of dissatisfaction and consternation among the troops before it was finally pinned down as a clever German lie.

IT is some weeks now since the Home Office reported that they were considering schemes for making the streets a bit lighter at night. But, so far, nothing has happened. In answer to any question, the authorities give the same answer—that they have had no opportunity for observing these tentative schemes from the air. No one, however, has explained why the aerial observation has not been carried out. It cannot be supposed that the R.A.F. are unwilling or unable to fly over London. Meanwhile, every traveller returning from Paris reports that the streets there are infinitely better lit than London, Manchester or Glasgow. And Paris is a good deal nearer Germany than Glasgow.

THE Prime Minister made an odd remark in the House the other day when he was asked if he had noticed that a lot of people were in favour of having an Economic Minister in the Cabinet. "Yes," he replied, "but I haven't noticed that any of them have had any experience of government themselves." This, if taken to a logical conclusion, means that only ex-Ministers

(Concluded on page 344)

War smiles: *last time the heads of the "Western democracies" met was when Monsieur Lebrun visited King George in peaceful March (the month Hitler took Czechoslovakia and Memel). This time the President and the Monarch met as embattled Allies behind their joint front line and the visitor entertained the host to lunch in a provincial town in eastern France. Premier Daladier and C.-in-C. Gort were also present, posed with their chiefs for an official photograph. His Majesty had the day before decorated some French generals with British orders: in return he was presented with the badge of the Maginot Line inscribed "On ne passe pas"*

The Man With the Voice

Most Englishmen Know Gram Swing—by Sound

Roughly twice a month for the last three years the forthright, measured burr of Raymond Gram Swing in "American Commentary" has made English households, lulled by B.B.C. news, sit up. This is the man of the voice and, as far as we're concerned, he suits it well. Swing (Gram is his wife's maiden name) graduated to spoken from written journalism, got his picture of Europe as correspondent for four American papers (he scooped the news of the Big Bertha shelling Liège last war). His talk is the distillate of three or four hours' work on his subject and is read from script, his principles being "get your sense of the situation as sound as can be, put it in language the man in the street can understand." Over there, he is a star commentator for Mutual (WOR)

The Passing Hour

(Continued from page 342)

ought to be allowed to criticise or offer suggestions. And then where's Democracy, eh?

THE sidelights on this war are of an endless variety. Farmers are organising extra numbers of pigeon-shooting parties this year, in order to stock the larder, and owners of homing-pigeons are in a state of alarm. The Minister of Agriculture has promised to issue an appeal to farmers to discriminate between the birds, but the urban population which is now living in the country will be safe to fire at anything which flies. But then, anything which flies will be pretty safe from the urban population, so it cuts both ways.

IT is a great pity that for administrative reasons it has been found necessary to postpone the coming into force of the House to House Collection Act. This was to have begun to operate on January 1st, and it is designed to control charity collections which are springing up like mushrooms all over the country. "Charities," with lovely sentimental titles are transferring sixpences and shillings from kindly people, who can ill afford them, into the pockets of the promoters. All the promoter has to do is to think up some nice, snappy title, preferably including the words "War" and "Royal," and then deluge the country with collectors. It is a nice easy racket, and the sooner it stops the better.

THIS is a true example of how our export trade is being suppressed by officialdom. A man went into a shop in the capital of a neutral state and asked for an electric lamp. He was offered a German one. He asked for an English or French one instead. The shopkeeper replied: "I used to have English and French lamps, but I can no longer get them, so I telephoned to Dresden for these, and got them within twenty-four hours."

Tennis-player *Kay Stammers announced her engagement on December 8th to Michael Menzies, son of the late F. Graham Menzies, and Mrs. Menzies, of 37, Chesham Place, S.W.1. They are going to be married in January, by which time Mr. Menzies will have got his commission in the Welsh Guards. Kay Stammers' parents are Mr. and Mrs. Hubert Stammers, of Wood Walk, St. Albans, Herts.*

MISS PAMELA FRANKAU did a bold thing when she wrote a political pantomime, produced last week at the Whitehall Theatre. It is notorious that the British dislike political satire in the theatre intensely. In fact, Shaw's *Geneva* is just about the only example of a successful satire on international affairs. But Miss Frankau has been even bolder than that. She has produced *Who's Taking Liberty?*, in rhymed couplets throughout, with Stalin and Hitler as the two Ugly Sisters, and Liberty as Cinderella. It will be interesting to see how the Christmas public react to such audacity.

A NEW book on Napoleon by Colonel C. O. Head has just been published. The gallant Colonel definitely dislikes the little Corsican, and has written a violent attack upon him. Naturally, everyone is entitled to their own opinions, but considering the circumstances of December 1939, I think that to publish a book in which Napoleon is several times compared to Hitler is of the worst possible tactlessness. But I am not sure that another remark in the book is not even nearer low-water-mark of stupidity. The gallant Colonel actually says that France has made an idol of Napoleon because she has produced so few outstanding figures in history! This is the way to keep the spirit of an alliance together when we are fighting for our lives.

THE season approaches of Peace towards Men of Goodwill. But at this Christmas Goodwill counts for nothing. There is Peace for no one, good or evil, neither Peace of mind nor Peace of body. So there is nothing for me to do but to wish you all as merry a Christmas as you can achieve and as happy a New Year as is possible.

Labour M.P.s *made the customary examination of the Bren gun when they paid a visit to a mechanised Territorial division in the Southern Command. The Inspector-General of the Home Forces, General Sir Walter Kirke, gave a brief lecture with his walking-stick as pointer, two gunners with check-duster-covered tin hats demonstrated, and in the audience were Dr. Hugh Dalton, Mr. Clem Attlee, Mr. Arthur Greenwood, Sir Walter Citrine, Mr. George Hicks, Mr. H. P. Lees-Smith*

The Australian Air Minister. *James Fairbairn, arrived in London recently from Ottawa, where he had been discussing the training of Australian pilots in Canada. Australia will have a squadron on active service with the R.A.F. Coastal Command early in the New Year. Mr. Fairbairn is an expert pilot himself, flies his own 'plane 400 miles from his sheep station to Canberra. He is a nephew of Steve Fairbairn, the famous rowing coach*

Howitzer Home

Down the track where the harvest wains went in the autumn goes a battery of 6-in. howitzers, manned by an equally tired, cheery crew of men as sat on the corn. They are training in England for shipment to France after Christmas. The howitzer is a gun of great destructive power but small range, its heavy H.E. shells making a high trajectory and burying themselves to some depth before exploding. Here the guns and limbers are drawn by ordinary commercial petrol trucks

Women in Uniform

The Scottish Motor Company (F.A.N.Y.s)

The Scottish Motor Company *are the F.A.N.Y.s of the North, have their headquarters in a typical Scottish nineteenth-century mansion, granite-built, dormered and rather dour. Like their Southern sisters, the S.M.C. are attached to the A.T.S., and are trained to cope with every form of transport*

Maude Orr, *diving into the interior of a Staff car, is the youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Orr, of Kilduff House, Drem, East Lothian, is engaged to Pat Douglas in the Black Watch. Her two sisters have husbands in the Lanarkshire Yeomanry*

Company Commander Maud Maclellan *is the C.O. of the S.M.C. Her three stars (see right) give her the equivalent rank of a captain in the Army. She and her dog Dinah were photographed just before Kirk Parade*

Company Assistant Isobel Kay *was giving the C.O.'s buttons their Sunday polish (note the three stars of a Company Commander). Her own rank is the same as that of a second lieutenant. She and her sister Betty (see far right) are Ayrshire girls*

Ann Maitland *plays Scottish airs beautifully on her concertina. She is the younger daughter of Lieut.-Colonel and Mrs. Claude Maitland of Dundrennan. Her home is in the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, of which her father, who used to be in the Gordon Highlanders, is a D.L.*

Catriona Maclean, *17th Lady of Ardgour, is a private in the S.M.C. Her father, Lieut.-Colonel Maclean of Ardgour, died in 1930, her mother is Lord Inverclyde's sister*

Sub-Leader Margaret Mackenzie *of Dolphinton is a cheerful N.C.O. She is engaged to Captain Francis Johnstone, who is in the K.O.S.B. She is the only sister of the Laird of Dolphinton*

The Hon. Mrs. Douglas Watson *is a Staff car chauffeur. She is the wife of Lord Thankerton's elder son, was Enid Ballantyne, from Walkerburn, Peebles-shire. Her husband, a Writer to the Signet, is now in the A.A.*

Diana Falconer, *writing a letter in the mess, is the daughter of one of Edinburgh's A.R.P. chiefs*

Section Leader Norah Cuthbertson *is the secretary-sergeant, faces her portable typewriter with an air of calm efficiency*

Eleven o'clock tea *and a "piece" was in charge of Betty Kay, sister of Company Assistant Isobel Kay, and Catherine Hotham, in a chintz overall, who both work on the cookhouse staff. The latter is the youngest daughter of Mrs. J. B. Hotham, of Milne Graden, Coldstream, and sister of Viscountess Suirdale*

Two officers *(with two dogs) are Junior Commander Betty Kenneth and Company Assistant Betty Hunter-Cowan. Miss Kenneth, a full lieutenant in her war life, in peacetime lives at Auchendolly, Ayrshire, and hunts with the Eglinton*

Two sisters *in their working dress of dungarees and gum-boots are Joyce and Diana MacGregor. They had just taken the wheel off their giant lorry. All members of the S.M.C. are trained as mechanics as well as drivers*

Dug - Out Décor

Siren Calling : by Barribal

The Theatre: By Herbert Farjeon

"Who's Taking Liberty?" (Whitehall)

HERE is the first of the Christmas pantomimes—for, although it defines itself on the programme merely as "a new musical," *Who's Taking Liberty?*, with its Fairy Godmother, and its Evil Spirit, and its principal-boy Prince Charming, is clearly our old friend *Cinderella*, with variations. These variations are political. The Ugly Sisters, impersonated as the season demands, by males, have become Ugly Governesses, one German and one Russian. The Lord High Chamberlain is a Chamberlain in more than office. Cinderella herself, sitting disconsolate by the fire with her broom, is now named Liberty. Thus Pamela Frankau, who wrote the book and lyrics, seems to have decided that there is no reason why the Unity Theatre should have it all its own way, or why pantomime in the West End should not concern itself once again with national and international affairs. Time was when no Dick Whittington, no Aladdin, no Sleeping Beauty, no Babes in no Wood dreamt of appearing before the public without copious references to Campbell-Bannerman or Fashoda or Tariff Reform, and at least one long song, with encores twice its length, for the chief comedian to prove himself far more topical than any succeeding revue.

Gretchen and Katinka, ugly sisters: Frederick Burtwell, Reginald Purdell

WHAT knocked the politics out of pantomime? Could it have been the rise of the Labour Party, engendering fears that the new public might receive the traditionally Conservative proclivities of theatrical managers less acquiescently than had the Liberals in the past? Whatever the reason, out the politics went; and while we may regret their disappearance, I am inclined, after my visit to the Whitehall, to feel that a pantomime with no politics at all may be preferable to one that is made up of almost nothing else. The fun wears thin, although Reginald Purdell and Frederick Burtwell are full of beans, and not of the tinned variety, either, as the worst women in Europe. Dorothy Hyson makes the prettiest of Principal Girls, with just a touch of feeling at the right moments. And although Margaretta Scott, so closely associated with trunk-hose in the Park, strikes me as a more satisfying Principal Boy in theory than in practice, Leslie French as a stage hand wandering inconsequently through the piece provides some nice quiet fun.

Sketches by Rouson

Liberty enthralled: Dorothy Hyson

Prince Charming plus scene-shifter: Margaretta Scott, Leslie French

BUT somehow, *Who's Taking Liberty?* never really recovers from its unfortunate opening, with the company taking calls and receiving bouquets, as after a finale. This idea, besides being far from new, and in no way relevant to anything else, requires that a trio shall be introduced, to give the other actors time to change, before we get to what was probably Page One of the script—about ten minutes after the rise of the curtain. Thus bad begins, and though better remains behind, especially when Mr. Purdell and Mr. Burtwell hold the stage, it is difficult to get rid of the familiar feeling that a laudable attempt to do something slightly better has once again resulted in something not quite so good.

Standing By . . .

One Thing and Another

By D. B. Wyndham Lewis

"I said it's no longer a gentleman's war, eh?"

PERTURBED because some of the Christmas toy-shops are going to display models of the Maginot Line and the latest British and French tanks and bombing 'planes, a citizen has been saying in the papers that it was all very well to give children toy soldiers fifty years ago, when he was in the nursery, but it shouldn't be encouraged now. Evidently (we thought) this citizen is mumbling through his bowler-hat. Toy soldiers in Victorian red carrying lances and Martini-Henrys (or were they Martini-Rossis ?) did children no harm ; toy soldiers in modern battle-dress armed with Bren guns or driving tanks do. One could bet right away that behind such a runcible argument lay the uffish theory that after the present war the Great Rosy Dawn will finally rise—as in 1918—and banish wars for ever. And one would have been right. "Surely," this dreamy one concluded, "we may look to happier days in the future." Having written which, we deduce, he washed his hands, brushed his hair, and was ready for a romp with the fairies.

It probably isn't worth the toy-makers' while to cater specially for citizens with these ideas, or one could suggest some pleasing and improving alternatives to the toy soldiers they so fear. Toy City financiers, for example, sitting in model board-rooms and hatching big schemes for the suckers. Toy dons and other pacifists marching under tiny white flags, with fierce gestures urging other people to fight everybody they don't like. Toy M.P.s, half of them black in the face with gabble, flirting with the Parliamentary Glamour Girls. Toy vegetarians fleeing from the big mournful haunting eyes of toy cows and lambs. . . . Possibly British toy-makers have already been approached by inventors of something of the sort and have rejected such ideas with disgust, being in the main—unlike ugly Mr. Tackleton the toy-maker in *The Cricket on the Hearth*—kindly men, unwilling to give babies nightmares.

"He can't say 'The Leith Police,' much less 'The Leith Police dismisseth us'"

Pigsear

ARRANGEMENTS having been made with French brewers to produce "British type" beer for our troops, is it barely possible that some of the French may take to it themselves in due course and eschew the thin and cheerless bock ? Who knows ? We always thought that story by Maupassant called "Garçon, Un Bock !" was pretty far-fetched. It concerns a chap addicted to this trivial juice who drinks it all day long for years and, oddly enough, doesn't blow up or perish of dropsy before the narrator's eyes. The French, even in the north, don't know or care much about "body" as applied to beer ; unlike the Belgians, who brew a hairy tipple called —unless we err—Lambisque, a sort of vulgar third cousin of Audit Ale, which would knock a horse over. A pint or two of Lambisque under your belly-band and you begin to understand and appreciate the Flemish School and the spirit of the *kermesse*, and to realise the quiddity of Rubens's Fitness Girls and their enormous charms.

But for our terror of the great brewing families who rule England, we should here hint timidly that even the best kind of beer is a poor rustic uncivilised substitute for wine, as may be perceived from the effects of both, used moderately, on the human brain. If Slogger Blackstone, while engaged in his tremendous task of codifying the Laws of England, had done it on beer instead of claret (or was it port ? He had a bottle of wine constantly on his table, anyway), what sort of a mucker would he have made of it, do you think ?

Houp-la

GIGANTIC rumblings, mistaken by many for a thunderstorm, were heard the other day coming from the direction of the Elysian Fields. It was Dr. François Rabelais laughing his head off at finding himself quoted by Auntie *Times*, Guardian of British Decorum. True, Auntie had been careful to pick out one of the Doctor's less objectionable passages—Grandgousier's allocution to his enemy Picrochole's ambassador against conquest and aggression—but it must have caused a little flutter in the Close, even then. In the light of Rabelais' own intention, perhaps, the application of this passage to current happenings was not so happy as it seemed. By Picrochole Rabelais means the Emperor Charles V., by Grandgousier François I., whose loyal henchman Dr. Rabelais was ; and nobody ever practised aggression less than Charles V., who was merely concerned with keeping his vast empire together. However, the coarse fellow Rabelais' existence has been recognised by Printing House Square, which is more than yours or ours is.

Still, fair 's fair. If, like Auntie, you choose to ignore Rabelais' politics, Picrochole becomes a true precursor of Hitler in his raving megalomania and comic frenzy for world-conquest.

Legend

IT was inevitable that the romantic Press boys should sooner or later discover a private soldier (unnamed) who, being admonished by his colonel

for not making his wife a marriage allowance out of his pay, replied politely that she was already getting £5000 a year from his estate. We smelt that story on its way the day after conscription was introduced; it 's what the film boys call a " natural," like the Little Old Lady of Armistice Day, and nobody can complain about it, even if it 's true. (The Little Old Lady, in case you 've forgotten, was the inspiration by a chap we knew. She saw ghosts on Armistice Day 1919, 1920, 1921, and 1922, after which the Editor got sick of her and she was sunk without trace.) Another " natural," the one about the wealthy private having to leave a smart West End restaurant by order of an officer who turns out to be one of his late junior clerks, has just been killed by the War Office's ruling that private soldiers may use the same restaurants and hotels as officers. This is so logical, given the nature of the present Army, that we 're still surprised, mildly and agreeably. Logic has never been a strong point with the British military mind. Even in the eighteenth century, when it was axiomatic that the officer-caste was of different flesh and blood from the scum it led—hence the whippings on parade and the savage punishments for insubordination—commissions were regularly purchased for handsome footmen by ladies of quality who had tired of their charms.

One more logical military step remains to be taken, a knowledgeable chap tells us: the continuance of conscription henceforth as a normal, rational and essential duty and privilege of the British citizen, as it is of others throughout Europe. Naturally one couldn't ever call it conscription; some more coy, genteel euphemism even than " militia " will probably suggest itself by the time it 's needed, such as " military helps " or " compulsettes."

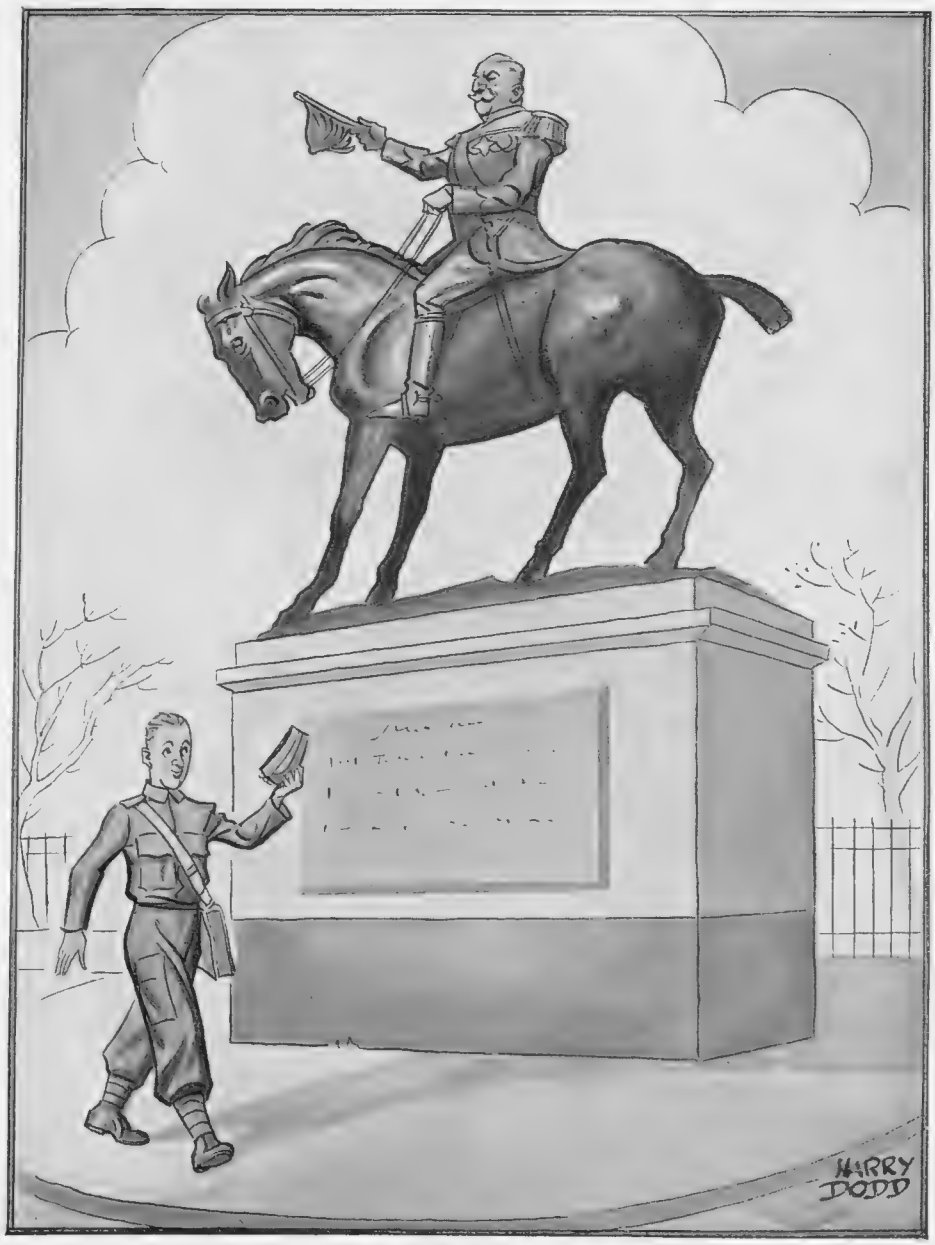
Game

If you think our firm attitude to English Cricket is mere godless mockery and lewd trifling, allow us to bring to your notice a recent declaration at the Cambridge conscientious objectors' tribunal. Defending his son's objection to fighting for his country, a proud father uttered these memorable words: " *I have seen him batting against the fastest bowling in England, and I am sure there is no question of physical fear.*" The implications of which affirmation are so rich and stupendous that we feel only some eminent hierarch of the game, like Archbishop Fry or Bishop Jardine, could deal adequately with them. They bear out all we used to read during those Test matches: the warriors battling desperately for Mother England on the stricken field; their stern fighting courage; their dogged endurance; the anguish, the terror, the hopes, the fears, the wild acclamations which used to make us laugh ourselves sick as we thought of the wooden heroes in their little schoolboy caps hitting at a bit of leather with a bit of wood, surrounded by thousands of the dumbest clucks in Europe. Thermopylæ and Hattin, Lepanto and Wattignies and Austerlitz and Verdun were tea-fights on the Rectory lawn in comparison, one gathered, and when you heard the Island Race talking reverently about " The Don " you knew they didn't mean Don John of Austria, who saved our Christendom, still less Don Quixote, and even less Don Juan de Mañara, but Mr. Bradman, the Cid Campeador of our age. It 's our considered opinion that this is a pathological issue and one of grave import. We knew a tall bronzed cricketer in the last war who regarded the troops with genial condescension and saw them off to the front line again with breezy cries of " Good luck! " and " Play the game! " He himself fulfilled the sterner national duty, at home, of coaching schoolboys at the nets.

Query

Quite a little fuss has arisen in certain quarters—you guess those quarters—because a London magistrate remarked in court the other day " I will not let a couple of ruffians like the accused, especially one with a name like ———— " (here a name ending in " -vitch ") " behave in such a manner." Which raises an interesting problem: namely, whether an alien is entitled to behave as badly in a given country as a native. In theory, and in law, we take it he is—but in practice? If a man named Smith insults your wife, do you hit him as hard as if he were a man named Zogitoff, Buttinsky, Pomponnet, Spaghetti, or Hoggenheimer, the insult in each case being equal? Obviously this quickly narrows down to a question of private or inherited prejudice. Many chaps in such circumstances would hit a Latin (unless he were very big and strong) twice as hard as they 'd hit a Nordic, for the simple reason that they 've been taught to loathe the Mediterranean Culture, and a Bloomsbury Red would probably let anybody with a name ending in " -vitch " or " -off " insult his wife till the cows came home, and might even conceivably join in. On the whole, our degraded view is that the magistrate was merely spurning hypocrisy and facing realities, for however tedious a ruffian named Mr. Smith (say) may be, everyone feels he has more right to annoy his own countrymen than an equally tedious ruffian named (say) Mr. Grabinovitch; just as being stung by a British financier is less irritating to a true-born Briton than being stung by a Levantine. We 're not defending such absurd Chauvinist preferences, we 're just trying to explain them to ourselves for your benefit—or would you rather we gave you a jolly abrasion on the left leg with a little toy saw we have?

D. B. Wyndham Lewis



Films of the Day

Marxian and Formbeian: an analysis

By George Campbell

GEORGE FORMBY'S *Come On, George* is English humour a long way from its best, but by no means at its worst. Substitute American for English, and the same thing is true of the Marx Brothers' *A Day at the Races*. It would be fair, therefore, to use these two works as texts for an essay, in the Aldous Huxley manner, on the characteristics of English and American comedy—what they have in common, and (more obvious and more instructive) their fundamental differences in feeling, approach and technique.

The philosophical aspect, including the basic problem why man, possibly alone amongst the animals, has a sense of humour, may be left to students of Kant and Bergson and Croce, all of which are summarised for most of us in the American's dictum on Matthew Arnold—"nowhere to go for a laugh." But there is another and strictly practical side. Just why Tombstone (Ariz.) laughs at jokes that leave Saffron Walden cold, why great sections of the British public roar approval at stuff that Broadway sits through stony-faced; or, more probably, walks out on—you have only to find the answer to these questions and any producer anywhere will pay you ten thousand a year and be in pocket.

CERTAIN generalisations seem plausible. We can say, on the evidence of George Formby's and Gracie Fields' enormous popularity, that the British public likes conventional plots (Cinderella and the male equivalent, Local-boy-makes-good), broad gags and a slow tempo. We can lay it down, on the unsafe assumption that the Marx Brothers' comedy is typical of and relished by the American people as a whole, that the American sense of humour is quicker and subtler, revelling in the fantastic and grotesque. The English comedians are simple, down-to-earth, sentimental. Millions of shop-girls and mill-hands, as many commonplace young men, see in the adventures of Miss Fields and Mr. Formby the reflection of their own dreams—comically distorted, of course, but fundamentally real.

One could argue, perhaps, that the Marx Brothers also reflect life, of a kind. The scoundrel-heroes of eighteenth-century comedy were the product of an age when men of ambition but no means were forced to live on their wits. In America, where life is full of lightning ups and downs, where every other man is trying to sell somebody something, and you have to think fast or go hungry, one finds the novelist and dramatist exploiting the same types. For examples we need go no farther than Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford and O. Henry's Gentle Grafter.

BUT in actual fact, of course, the Marx Brothers are not typical of all America. Outside the American big cities they are almost as unpopular as they are in the English provinces. Their earlier farces, witty, wild, and essentially surrealist, delighted the connoisseurs, but so irritated the masses everywhere that Paramount found the series a bad investment. They sold the brothers down the river to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, who forced them to modify their technique. *A Night at the Opera* and *A Day at the Races* had a plot, of sorts; for the first time a Marx Brothers' film had a shape and form; it almost made sense. It even—and the brothers' original fans found this particularly revolting—it even had a love-story, complete with starry-eyed heroine and tenor. Whether this attempt to sweeten the surrealist pill has had the desired effect at the box-office is a secret between the brothers and M.-G.-M.

"AT THE CIRCUS" is some distance below *A Night at the Opera* and *A Day at the Races*, both of which I thought superb, but it will serve. Florence Rice, even in a blonde wig, is a personable young woman with some talent, but, at the risk of being regarded as a jealous old sourpuss, I must record the view that Kenny Baker is not the romantic type. Anyway, I, for one, found their exchanges, and a duet entitled "Two Blind Loves," about as entertaining as a crooning dentist.

For a time the Marx Brothers, too, are somewhat pianissimo, but each gets his chance in the end. Chico does his superb piano turn, with fingering undreamed of by Paderewski; Harpo plays the harp with immense seriousness and skill, besides taking part in a Negro interlude that recalls, less successfully, the brilliant Pied Piper scene in an earlier film; and Groucho wisecracks everywhere — not always in his very best vein, perhaps, but well enough to keep any intelligent audience entertained. His best joke is a trade one—a glance at the stolen wallet in the blonde's corsage and then, with a glance direct at the audience, a confidential: "There must be *some* way of getting that money without trouble with the Hays office."

Gradually the *longueurs* disappear, the tempo (the whole thing would have been better for sharper cutting) livens up, and the finale, with the social Mrs. Dukesbury shot from a cannon on to the high trapeze, with Groucho hanging from her legs while a gorilla chases the crook from rope to rope until they, too, are hanging from the unfortunate hostess, and the symphony orchestra which should have entertained the party is drifting down the Hudson on a raft—all this is in the Marx Brothers' most triumphant vein. For the first time for a year or more I laughed until I cried; and to affect us that way these days a film must have *something*.

"At the Circus": Harpo, Groucho and Chico Again

The three Marx Brothers have turned up again "At the Circus" (at the Empire from December 8th). This, their latest, is discussed in Mr. Campbell's article above. At its finale, he admits that he laughed till he cried. The lovely heroine and tenor hero, who are now an obligatory part of every Marx film, are in this case Florence Rice and Kenny Baker

Balbo Africanus

In 1896, Camillo and Malvina Balbo, citizens of Quartesana (Ferrara), had a son and, as it was a time of risorgimento, they called him Italo. He had just completed his education with a Doctorate of Social and Political Science when war broke out. Italo Balbo spent it as a lieutenant in the Alpini, became friendly with an agitator called Mussolini, marched on Rome with him and his Fascisti in 1922, and found himself in power. He was head of the militia, 1923; Under-Secretary for Economics, 1925-6; for Air, 1926-9; Air Minister, 1929-33, in which time he had become a pilot and attained rank of Air Marshal. In August, 1933, he headed a mass flight from Rome to New York, became a national hero, and was promptly sent to govern Libya. The inference was that Balbo, a hearty man and a good liver, had become too popular for the likings of his chief. But it proved wrong. He had been singled out as the ablest Fascist for the purposes of re-founding the Roman littoral Empire, soon to expand by 350,000 square miles. How and where Italo Balbo lives in his Barbary State is shown overleaf

Continued overleaf

Balbo Africanus, *now only forty-three, likes smart suits, wears his light-weight pork-pie at an angle, talks with a wealth of gesture. Here he is making a point to the Diplomatic Attaché, Baron Scola Camerini*

His capital *is Tripoli, the ancient Phœnician-founded Oea (not to be con used 810,000 square miles of sand and scrub, over his million souls—Italians, Arabs (where the work is done), and the aerodrome, where he keeps his private monoplane strong anti-Italian sentiment; and has capped this by granting Italian n tion*

His family *consists of a son and two daughters (Signora Balbo was Emanuella Florio before her marriage), the girls being named Valeria and Giuliana. Their father, in his Air Marshal's uniform, here plays with them in the fine grounds of his palace. His duties as Governor-General have not obscured his first love for the air, and he usually pilots his monoplane himself in frequent hops to the interior or to his week-end refuge at Zliten. He is still Italy's foremost airman and of ace rank among world pilots*

Balbo Africanus

(Continued)

The Governor-General o Libya at Home in Tripoli

"OLD BILL" commented shrewdly on the North African situation in the summer, when Mussolini's crowds were vociferating "Corsica! Tunis!" He stood in the desert, and round him, "boundless and bare, the lone and level sands" stretched far away; "Wouldn't it be terrible if France lost all this to Italy?" he was saying. But Old Bill, heir to a vast and fruitful Empire, can afford to be ironic about bits of desert. Mussolini, ruler of a mere million square miles, cannot. So we have the spectacle of an ambitious government throwing all its energies into colonising a poor piece of land that has done no good since the Romans left it. With admirable determination, Italy has exported two large consignments of her hard-working peasants to North Africa; Tripolitana has been renamed Libia Italiana; and a star member of the party in power has been proconsul since 1933. Now, with her chief rivals wasting their substance at an enormous rate, neutral Italy is sitting pretty for the consolidation and amelioration of her empire. Mussolini took the chance to underline the armed nature of his peace when he received Marshal Balbo on November 24th: the official statement described him as "Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of Northern Africa, which comprise a group of armies, a corps of Libyan troops, a corps of Saharan troops, a naval command, an air force command, a command of the militia"

with Tripoli in Syria). Here he rules in considerable state over his Berbers, and Jews, alternating between his palace (above), the castle A popular figure with his subjects, he has succeeded in mollifying a ality to the Arabs. His territory is seven times as great as Italy

His guards *are white-gloved native Carabinieri, called Zaptie: this one, a handsome Berber, is at the salute*

Basta! *said the Marshal, half-raising his hand. The photographer had taken up enough of a busy man's time. [Basta! means Stop, that's enough!*

***Mountain tracks** in Australia run, not through pines, but through forests of giant eucalypts or gum-trees, which shed their bark but not their leaves, making a strange impression on European eyes. Here ski-ers were riding along the Ben-Accord track on Mount Hotham*

***On Mount Hotham** are some of the best ski-fields of Victoria, including the 'Varsity Drag run. Mount Hotham chalet is the starting point for long tours on the Bogong High Plain. There is a new Mount Bogong hut, which has opened up fresh snow country on that mountain*

Snow in the South

Summer Ski-ing on Australian Mountains

Their winter is our summer, and ski-ing is over in Australia until next June. But while the French and Swiss and Austrian Alps are out of bounds for most ski-ers this winter, it is both comforting and painful to remind ourselves of other continents' freedom to be happy on the mountains. Australia owns the second oldest ski-club in the world, that of Kiandra, an old gold-mining township of New South Wales, where ski-ers founded a club in 1861. Around here there are ski-fields over an area 100 miles long, 10 to 40 miles wide. The whole snow area of Australia is rather bigger than that of Switzerland, but the terrain, with its wide touring country, is more of the Norwegian type, and a run of two miles with a drop of 2000 feet is a good average in New South Wales. The pictures here were all taken in the mountains of Victoria. Further south still, in Tasmania, there is a great snow country as yet only partly opened up, with hotels and chalets and huts, for the ordinary ski-er

***From June to September** the snow lies on the mountain-ranges of New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania, and sometimes in late seasons there is ski-ing till November on the 7300-ft. Mount Kosciusko, near the N.S.W.-Victoria boundary. Everywhere the contours and, above all, the vegetation, give a certain air of fantasy to the winter-sports setting*

***Harrietville** is one of the many Victorian centres. The office of the local "snowline representative" is the place to go for guides, information, skis, repairs, waxing, and the usual endless ski-ing talk*

Nursery slopes *look the same all the snow world over. The chief Australian ski-schools are on Mount Kosciusko in New South Wales, and Mount Buffalo in Victoria. Everywhere the Arlberg system is taught, often by Austrian guides like Tony Walch, of the famous Steuben family, who is an instructor at Mount Hotham*

Pamela May

A Vic-Wells Dancer in Two Classical Roles

The Vic-Wells Ballet returns to its own home at Sadler's Wells next Tuesday (Boxing Day) for a four or five weeks' season. Since the war the company has been touring the provinces on a co-operative basis, and with two pianos instead of an orchestra. For its London season it returns as nearly as possible to pre-war conditions (one or two of the younger men have, however, been called up), with a full orchestra and with at least two full-length classical ballets in the repertoire. *Giselle* is being given during the first week and *The Sleeping Princess* a little later. There will be four performances a week, at 2 and at 6.30

Photographs by Anthony

As Odette in "Le Lac des Cygnes"

It was expected that Pamela May would make her first appearance in a leading classical role—Odette in the second act of "Le Lac des Cygnes"—towards the end of last season at Sadler's Wells. This was postponed, but is likely to take place as soon as war arrangements permit the ballet to be given again. Her pure, noble, slightly cold style should be exceptionally suited to the Swan Queen. In technique, attack, and in her understanding of her roles, she has developed in the last two years in a way that makes her one of the most interesting of all young dancers to follow. She is now in her seventh year with the Vic-Wells Ballet: two years as a student, and five in the company. Besides her parts in the classical ballets—the Rose Fairy in "The Sleeping Princess," the Queen of the Wilis in "Giselle"—her most important roles are in "Horoscope," "Checkmate," "The Gods Go A-Begging." And she has recently taken over Ursula Moreton's part as the Street Dancer in "The Rake's Progress"

The Rose Fairy

A grand jeté and an arabesque from "Lac" show Pamela May's superbly straight legs, lovely feet, and the beauty of her line

Action studies of Pamela May's solo in "The Sleeping Princess": a pirouette en attitude and a well-poised developpé à seconde

The Snagge Sisters

Sir Harold and Lady Snagge's Four Married Daughters and Three of their Grandchildren

Sitting on the floor are Mrs. Bruce Ottley (Claudia Violet) and Mrs. Lionel Gibbs (Elizabeth Sonia); on the seat are the twins, Mrs. Esmond Baring (Zalia) and Lady Tichborne (Antonia)

Lady Tichborne has one daughter, Anne, born in March last year

Mrs. Esmond Baring has two daughters, Caroline Venetia, who is nearly three, and a baby born last October year

Sir Harold and Lady Snagge (of 13, St. Leonard's Terrace, S.W.3) have six children—two sons, and the four attractive daughters in the group here. The eldest, Mrs. Bruce Ottley, married the banker-balletomane, Captain Bruce Ottley, in 1923, has a son, Lionel, at Eton, and a daughter, Irene Portia, who is eleven this year. The second of the four is Mrs. Lionel Gibbs. The twins were both married in the same year—1936—when they were twenty-one. Lady Tichborne's husband is Sir Anthony Tichborne, Bt., owner of Tichborne Park, at Alresford, in Hampshire. Mrs. Baring's husband is the fourth son of the late Lieut.-Col. the Hon. Guy Baring, and a cousin of Lord Ashburton; they live in Chester Terrace, S.W.1. Their two brothers are Lionel Snagge, who married an American wife, Eleanor Goodwin Smith, in 1932, and Richard Basil Snagge. Sir Harold Snagge is a director of Barclay's Bank and other companies, was a director of the Ministry of Information in the last war

Photographs by Lenare

The "Bystander" Bookshelf

The Sunset of Poise

By V. S. Pritchett

JULIA CARDWELL, of Miss Naomi Royde-Smith's *Urchin Moor* (Macmillan; 8*s.* 6*d.*), was one of those neutral-tinted Englishwomen who are the despair of the Latin amorist. Marrying for poise and property, non-interventionist in passion, the Julias of England were the traditional heroines of Victorian fiction. One sees a whole line of them, unspeakably snobbish in Jane Austen, unattainably informed in George Eliot, moralising to the point of monstrosity in Mrs. Humphrey Ward, and in Mrs. Virginia Woolf fluttering away to nothing. But the type persists, responsible, intelligent and ungifted, and I admire Miss Naomi Royde-Smith for reviving it and placing it against one of her solid sunsets. She has written, in fact, an admirable novel, equitable in judgment, economical yet thorough, humorous rather than witty, and pleasantly aware that the gods are just and of our pleasant virtues makes instruments to scourge us.

Julia's virtue was the fatal one of unselfishness. She wanted to *make* other people happy, and not, as her sister said, just to leave them alone and let them *be* happy. She married a young war widower because she loved his ancient and beautiful house and his child; and she was devoted to her husband with that anxiety which in England so easily takes the place of passion. It was a natural indulgence for her to suppress what jealousy she had of her husband's first wife, to assume he disliked his first wife's child because he disapproved of its mother's morals, to perpetuate his silence about the woman, and to preserve him as a gentleman. But Nature abhors a gentleman. Women like Julia Cardwell, whose passions are mild, are disingenuous. Thus, although her management of her husband's animosity towards his son was a tribute to her devotion, she neglected the fact that the laws of passion have their own morality. Even virtue must be paid for. Islanded in the safe post-war England, rich, sedulously restoring her husband's ancestral house, and quite convinced that by merely believing in the "immorality of war" she was making the world safe from it, Julia found that outside forces were breaking in. First the bungalows, then their unknowable inhabitants, then the younger generation, and, finally, the refugees. In Linda, an Austrian singer and exile, she meets the antithesis of herself, all those passions she has, in her hygienic English way, disinfected, all those risks her class has enabled her to avoid. This is a full book with a real variety of character. The lesser figures are not just stuck on as trivial decoration. The old mad grandmother, so much more genuine than the vast horde of mad grandmothers in fiction; the limp, ladylike and blastingly intelligent young tutor; the horsey peer, the wonderful Mrs. Dump in her infinitely stretchable cardigans, the main-chance butterfly Mrs. Cressy Thompson—they are solid and have their native flavours. Julia's husband alone is shadowy, though the note on his slight squint when he proposed is one of those touches of a master. *Urchin Moor* is a fine example of the English tradition of moral seriousness and social humour; it has even perhaps some suggestion of the social complacency of that tradition; but it is intelligent, full-bodied and satisfyingly alert.

Engaged

Audrey Harris, who published last spring an excellent travel-book, "Eastern Visas," has announced her engagement to Edward de Merindol Malan, only son of Walter de Merindol Malan. She is the elder daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. Cecil Harris, of 47, Phillimore Gardens, W., and Moatlands, East Grinstead, Sussex

MR. DAVID HORNER also has a full feeling for English comedy. *Was it Yesterday?* (Macmillan; 7*s.* 6*d.*) is an autobiographical record of childhood in an English seaside town, a story of the sedate, waspish, slightly insane gentility of those aunts and cousins we have all had. Here they are bickering in the garden, backbiting at breakfast, transmogrified in church. Here is the high-school mistress who never quite lived down the fact that she took her hot-water bottle through the streets in a red flannel cover, an act of absent-mindedness which, to the secret flamboyant prurience of these exquisite spinsters, suggested an indecency beyond a schoolboy's dreams. Here is the bishop's daughter, Miss Floud, learned but "so odd, my dear." Then there are the browbeaten shopkeepers, painfully divided between the aspiration to serve "the residents" and the more remunerative temptation to catch the trippers. As in his book on France, Mr. Horner catches the many seaside flavours completely. The genteel and the ribald, those inseparables of the English resorts, are captured with nostalgia and affection; and though the cousins no more sedately overwork their servants, nor over-eat, nor go out to their furiously successful gardening and their absurd meteorological observations, one feels no essential change has taken place at Frittlesea. The oddity of modern artiness—as, indeed, Mr. Horner suggests—echoes the oddity of the age of fossils, curios and the prim wonders of the Sunday morning "look through the microscope."

THERE are few genuinely tough writers in England, but Mr. Peter Chamberlain is one of them. His novel, *Sing Holiday*, was an excellent and original example of the genre. *Our Lives are Swiss* (Hamish Hamilton; 7*s.* 6*d.*) is a collection of short stories about chaps, lads, kids and pieces of skirt, and is a sourer and angrier book, less mature than the novel, but it shows the same ear for talk, the same unabashed candour with the same un-niceties of behaviour. A man murders his girl and wonders how to get rid of the body, reporters write up a motor race, a youth tries to pick up a servant, the usual rough stuff takes place at a wedding, and unusual rough stuff wrecks a party which a G.O.M. of English letters has given to the younger generation. The latter is a poor tale. The best story is the portrait of a sadistic schoolmaster. All this stuff hits the eye and ear, it is varied and lively. It is a picture of a vulgar, bored, emotionally thwarted England. But putting the book down, one is inclined to echo the title of one of the sketches and ask, "So What?" This is the "low-down" done by one of our smartest reporters; but what does it mean?

SIR GEORGE FRANCKENSTEIN was Austrian Ambassador in London for the last eighteen years, and the King knighted him when the Nazi invasion destroyed his country. *Facts and Features of My Life* (Cassell; 15*s.*) is a simple, frank and often instructive account of an interesting career. His candid reports on the Belgian situation during the German occupation in 1914 are especially valuable. The Germans seem incapable of understanding the psychology of other nations and their idea of handling democracies is to man-handle them.

LIBRARY list:

Nobody Ordered Wolves. By Jeffrey Dell (Heinemann; 7*s.* 6*d.*).

Yesterday's Dreams. By Ruth Feiner (Dakers; 8*s.* 6*d.*).

Christ in Concrete. By Pietro di Donato (Gollancz; 7*s.* 6*d.*).

More Fragments from France : By Bruce Bairnsfather

"Yus, Son, we was eighteen months just where you 're standin'. Then come the big push and we got to 'ere."

"Bystander" Short Story

Third-Party Risk

By Peter Traill

"And that's where they have you, you see," Roger Blake said, and emphasised the conclusion of his speech by putting down the remainder of his whisky-and-soda in one gulp. The tirade, the last sentence of which echoed round the small sitting-room, was addressed to his friend, Paul Prain, who looked sympathetic, but didn't see in the least.

"D' you mean to say she ran out of petrol on purpose?" he asked. Blake ran his fingers through his fair hair and grinned faintly.

"I wouldn't put it past her," he answered.

"How long have you known the woman?" Prain asked.

"Three or four years: I like her husband, and I 'm fond of someone else, anyway."

"It's very awkward," Prain conceded, after a little deliberation.

What had actually happened was that Roger Blake had taken a cottage in the country for three months, had remembered a few days ago that it was his fortieth birthday and, thinking that the occasion should not go unblessed, had invited the Shorts over to dinner. Unfortunately, Short himself had been in town on a city dinner, and his wife, Stephanie, had been alone. The evening *up* to the time of her departure, as Blake had been careful to explain, had been pleasant and friendly, and there had been nothing in their behaviour towards one another to which any exception could have been taken by anyone, even Short himself. However, some ten minutes after Stephanie had driven herself away and some five minutes after Roger Blake had gone to bed, he had been roused by a voice shouting his name from the lawn outside his window, and on going down to investigate, had discovered Stephanie sitting on the doorstep. She had, she complained, run out of petrol: she had failed to find a garage; she was very cold, and she asked him for suggestions.

There were many things which Roger Blake might have suggested, but what he actually did was to lead her back into the sitting-room, stir up the dying fire, and mix her a strong whisky-and-soda. He then telephoned the garage from which he usually hired his cars and, getting no answer from the place at that time of night, helped himself to a whisky-and-soda and sat down to consider the position.

It was Stephanie's suggestion that she might as well stay where she was, and when Roger Blake thought of having to dress himself all over again and wander about country roads in search of a tin of petrol, he thought that solution very satisfactory—especially as her husband was spending the night in town. What, however, had put him all wrong, as he expressed it to Paul Prain, was the fact that no sooner had he agreed with her than she jumped up and kissed him. Once the new relationship was introduced, Roger Blake felt extremely apprehensive as to the outcome of the next five or six hours; and in order to maintain his loyalty both to Short and to the woman of whom he was very fond, he plied Stephanie and himself with drink, played the gramophone and generally kept the situation in hand.

As the light grew, nevertheless, Stephanie's affectionate impulses became more and more pronounced, and it was only by hurling some clothes on and taking himself out of the house an hour before anyone was likely to be up that Roger Blake had managed, as he explained it, to maintain the status quo. It was kept, but he was nervous about the future.

"She 'll roll up one day and then I 'll be done," he replied to Paul Prain. "I know she 's fed up with that husband of hers; he 's a bit dull for her. So far as I can see, the only thing to do is to give up this cottage, and I 'm damned if I do that."

"That 's ridiculous," Prain agreed. "Anyway, she 's sure to telephone first in case you 've got guests, and you can always tell her you have."

"If she telephones," Blake conceded grudgingly.

Truth to tell, Paul Prain thought the whole business a bit far-fetched, and when he had spent a couple of days out of his week's stay in the house and the lady hadn't even telephoned, he put the episode down to excessive conviviality. On the third morning, which happened to be a Saturday and a day, as a rule, when Blake didn't go to town, he had a surprise. Blake had had to go up to London and he was sitting on the lawn, sipping a pink gin and looking at the dahlias, when he heard a car in the drive and a moment later a neat little woman, with a lithe figure, fair hair, and vivacious blue eyes, appeared on the lawn. Paul Prain rose from his chair, and as he watched her coming towards him, realised without any doubt that she must be the woman of whose intentions Blake was so afraid. Just why he should have been so certain he didn't know, but he was—and he was right.

"Where 's Roger?" she asked him, without any fuss.

"As a matter of fact, he 's gone to town," Prain answered. "He won't be back till lunch."

"How very stupid of him!" she exclaimed, and stood looking at him uncertainly. "I wonder if I 'd better wait?" Paul Prain looked at her very keenly and decided at once that, Roger Blake or no Roger Blake, she ought certainly to be detained.

"I know he 'll be back," he said decisively. "Why not stay? I 'll mix you a cocktail." She looked at him.

"You 're sure——?" she began.

"It 's no fun drinking by oneself," Prain put in heartily. "You sit down here while I make a Martini." He pushed his chair invitingly towards her. "My name 's Prain, by the way—Paul Prain," he threw over his shoulder as he went towards the house.

(*Concluded on page 368*)

If you want to give something that is practical as well as pretty, Gorringes, Buckingham Palace Road, suggest these bedroom slippers. The wedge-heeled leather ones cost 6s. 11d., the quilted satin pair 9s. 11d. Or they have these handbags for town by day, by night, or country week-ends, the last made into a set with a scarf

Present Time

A new frock makes a very satisfactory present for oneself, especially when it only costs 50s., like this one from Swan and Edgar, Piccadilly. It is in crêpe lamé, satin-backed, with an attractively draped front and fullness at the back of the skirt. The same model in uncrushable velvet costs 59/6

War work is hard on your hands, but these Peggy Sage manicure cases will help them to regain their peacetime smoothness. At prices from 10s. 6d., they contain her well-known hand preparations and the essential implements. You can buy them at your usual shop, or from the salon at 130, New Bond Street

Now that high-necked frocks go everywhere in the evening, costume jewellery is more important than ever. Woollands, of Knightsbridge, have this set of necklace, bracelet and brooch in cyclamen shades or in pearl. For your evening bag, there is this tiny square powder-box in gilt, with a motif, for 12s. 9d.

The mileage of these ten girls with seven-league boots is two hundred and ten

Seven-League Boots for Birmingham

"Pantomime House," in Oozell Street, Birmingham, is the headquarters of Emile Littler's big production organisation. Five or six full-size Christmas shows go forth from Pantomime House to provincial capitals every year, and this year finds it even busier with the Southern Regional Committee of National Service Entertainments installed there. In Pantomime House the music is written, the costumes, scenery and properties designed and made, the players picked and rehearsed. The place is quite openly called a factory. Birmingham, which thus appears to supply the nation not only with policy but with pantomimes, gets its own show from Littler's headquarters, and this year it is to be *Jack and Jill* at the Prince of Wales's Theatre. The girls in these pictures are trying on their seven-league boots for it

Sanity Fare

The Author of "Insanity Fair" Covers the War Fronts

By Douglas Reed

The King and the gun: *during his extensive tour of the lines of battle (see also p. 342) King George, in the uniform of a Marshal of the Royal Air Force and gum-boots, inspected this sandbagged anti-aircraft gun-emplacement behind the front line*

The War That Won't Grow Up

THIS war is like a partly-developed film—you cannot yet see its outline, nor tell what the completed picture will be like. I say this with a wary eye on the time-lag, for who knows whether, in the days between writing and publication, the picture may not have become clearer?

The Soviet flag bears a question-mark (it looks like that) and a hammer crossed, and the more Russia hammers her small neighbours into submission, the bigger the question-mark becomes.

What is she at? Is she just pocketing unconsidered trifles on her own, like others before her, or is this part of a synchronized German-Russian plan of alternating, westward-moving blows, to be merged into a full, military alliance of double striking-power at a given moment? Will Russia attack Sweden and Norway; will Germany attack Denmark, Holland and Belgium?

What would be the effect of this on Italy, who has now reaffirmed, in one breath, her neutrality and her military alliance with Germany? What would be the effect on Japan, on Spain, on the United States? Should we find allies to counterbalance Germany's ally?

The Fog of War

NEVER was this phrase so apt as now, for the outlook is as obscure as a winter landscape in an evening mist.

If the Germans and Russians have this jointly preconcerted plan about the Northern European States, they will have another about the Balkans—about Rumania and Turkey, at the least. They will probably partition Rumania, the oil-bearing regions falling to Germany, and King Carol's army could offer little resistance to this overwhelming might.

Turkey? That is a different bird. The Turks would fight long and hard.

The Roman Umpire

THIS development would, at once, impale Signor Mussolini on the horns of his gravest dilemma and put him, yet again, in a marvellous position for exacting the highest price either for his neutrality or support.

For, while he reaffirmed his "neutrality" and his "military alliance with Germany," he added that "everything that may happen in the Danube basin and the Balkans cannot fail to interest Italy directly."

If that German-Russian plan to carve up Europe exists, it is fairly safe to foretell that the partners, Red and Brown, would seek to propitiate the Italian interest in "everything that happens in the Balkans and the Danube basin," and to keep Italy on her fence, by offering her, for the taking, a large part of Yugoslavia; part or all of Hungary, which is kingless, anyway; and Greece.

That would give Italy Soviet Russia as next-door neighbour. The Fascist censorship has allowed Italian opinion to express violent hostility to Russia's attack on Finland. I think we might have inducements to offer which should cause Italy to think twice, at least, about our side of the fence.

—And Peace to All Men

SOON our soldiers will be spending their first Christmas in France. Once more, and so soon! Only yesterday I spent a smoky Christmas in billets in Bailleul; another in a dug-out before Ypres, with champagne and a slice of cake as Christmas dinner; another, with a bullet in my back, in a Brighton hospital; a fourth, flying over Lens. Now the uncomplaining khaki figures are plodding again that muddy pilgrimage.

I have been impressed this war by the looks of our R.A.F. officers and men. The airmen of the last war, if I remember them rightly, were about as good as any the world had, but they were a tough, raw, short-and-gay, here-to-day-and-gone-to-morrow crowd; they lived hard, drank hard, flew hard, and laid the foundations of a new Service. The airmen of to-day show in their bearing, the wearing of their blue, their quiet and modest demeanour, that they have twenty-five years of tradition and training in them.

(Concluded on page 368)

Four men and a gun *inhabit this little nest in the French sector*

BY APPOINTMENT TO THE PRINCE OF WALES 1936
BY APPOINTMENT TO H.M. KING OF SWEDEN
Quality Tells..
LIQUEUR SCOTCH WHISKY
VAT
69
SANDERSON'S
VAT
69
Sanderson's LUXURY BLEND SCOTCH WHISKY

Sanity Fare *(Continued from page 366)*

All together *over the top go three medium tanks of the Royal Armoured Corps in training. This newly-created unit covers "everything armoured in the British Army" except the light carriers of the infantry*

The Welcome Surprise

THIS deserves to be put on record, if only for its contrast value. Having occasion to go to France, I needed a permit to take some manuscript notes with me and, first abandoning hope, went to the Ministry of Information; I knew for certain that some of the things that have been said about it were deserved.

I found a uniformed colonel who in about ten minutes, and without any waste of time or words, had telephoned the competent military censor at the G.P.O., induced him to stay overtime for the purpose of helping me, and given me a letter to him; and at the second place I was given every courtesy and help and, with the least possible delay, my permit. If that spirit spreads, all will be well yet in the new Ministries.

The Amateur Ambassadress

I DO not think any British newspaper mentioned the most extraordinary of all the extraordinary things that happen in these times, when you only need to read what a Dictator says and believe the opposite, to be dead right every time.

This is that Princess Hohenlohe—who has now departed our shores; whose signed picture of Hitler in her Mayfair house bore the inscription "To my dear friend, the Princess"; at whose disposal Hitler placed photographic copies of private letters to help her in a British court of law; and who, according to the letter of Hitler's aide-de-camp, read in court, laid the foundations of the Munich Agreement!—is of Jewish origins, and ineligible under Hitler's own Nuremberg laws to play any part whatever in German life or undertakings, far less to be his honoured guest and emissary!

All together *these skeleton "Blenheim" bombers move through the stages of assembly in a "secret" shop in England which is well up to quota in production. The "Blenheim" is the aircraft whose speed and range have outclassed anything of the enemy's and are reported to have done excellent work for the Finns against Russia*

Third-Party Risk *(Continued from page 363)*

"Mine 's Short—Stephanie Short," she said. "I 've heard Roger speak of you often." Sitting down in the chair, she watched him as he disappeared into the house, and when he came back with the shaker and two glasses, continued the conversation easily and without embarrassment.

"You know Roger very well, I suppose?" she said.

"Oh, donkey's years! Great chap, Roger. Terrific ladies' man!" As he paid his friend the bland compliment he thought he saw the blue in Stephanie Short's eyes harden.

"So they tell me," she answered. Paul didn't believe that anyone had ever told her anything of the kind.

"Have you known him long?" he questioned her, handing her her cocktail.

"A fair time. My husband 's a friend of his." She took the Martini and raised it gravely to her lips.

"Oh, of course—Short! How silly of me," Paul went on. "Met him the other day with Roger," he lied gracefully. "Roger made him laugh a lot—me as well, if it comes to that." He dragged another chair forward and sat down beside her.

"It must have been a good one if my husband laughed. He isn't very given to it." Her lips sat in a straight line, and Paul divined without much trouble that all was not well with the Short household.

"It wasn't in the least improper," he said hastily. "Not in the usual sense of the word. I 'll tell it you, if you like. I don't suppose Roger 'd mind." Stephanie Short, preparing to be bored, smiled at him and waited for him to proceed.

"It was about a fair lady who came to dine with him," he began, and watched her body grow taut. "That 's the worst about Roger," he continued inconsequently; "he can't keep his mouth shut if he thinks a yarn a good one."

"Really?" Stephanie answered. "I hate men who gossip." Paul didn't take her hatred to himself, and, indeed, from her obvious interest, it was plain she expected him to unfold the tale further.

"Yes: she came to dine," he went on. "And some time during the evening he let practically all her petrol out of the car. So you see, when she came to drive away—I gather it was pretty late—he 'd taken care of that—she hadn't gone more than a few hundred yards when she ran out of the stuff. There 'aren't many garages around here, as you probably know, and—well, she had to return to the house." Stephanie's laugh, Prain thought, was very strained, but she managed one.

"How very amusing!" she said.

"It amused your husband a good deal," Paul said. "Of course, I didn't laugh quite so much." Stephanie turned her eyes on to him.

"Why not?" she asked, rather puzzled.

"Well, it 's an old trick of Roger's; he 's done it several times before. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't," he threw off blandly. There was no mistaking the anger in Stephanie's expression then, and he hastily waved the shaker in front of her face. "Have a little more of this," he went on; "it 's mostly ice." Stephanie held out her glass, but didn't speak for a moment. When she did, her tone was as hard as granite.

"And did you gather that he 'd been successful on the last occasion?" she asked.

"Oh, rather—oh, I think so. I mean, I don't know really, but he sort of implied, you know." Stephanie put down the remainder of her cocktail and rose to her feet immediately.

"I don't think I can wait any longer for Roger," she announced. Prain jumped up from his chair.

"Oh, do," he said. "He 'll be so disappointed, I 'm sure." Stephanie smoothed out her skirt with her hands.

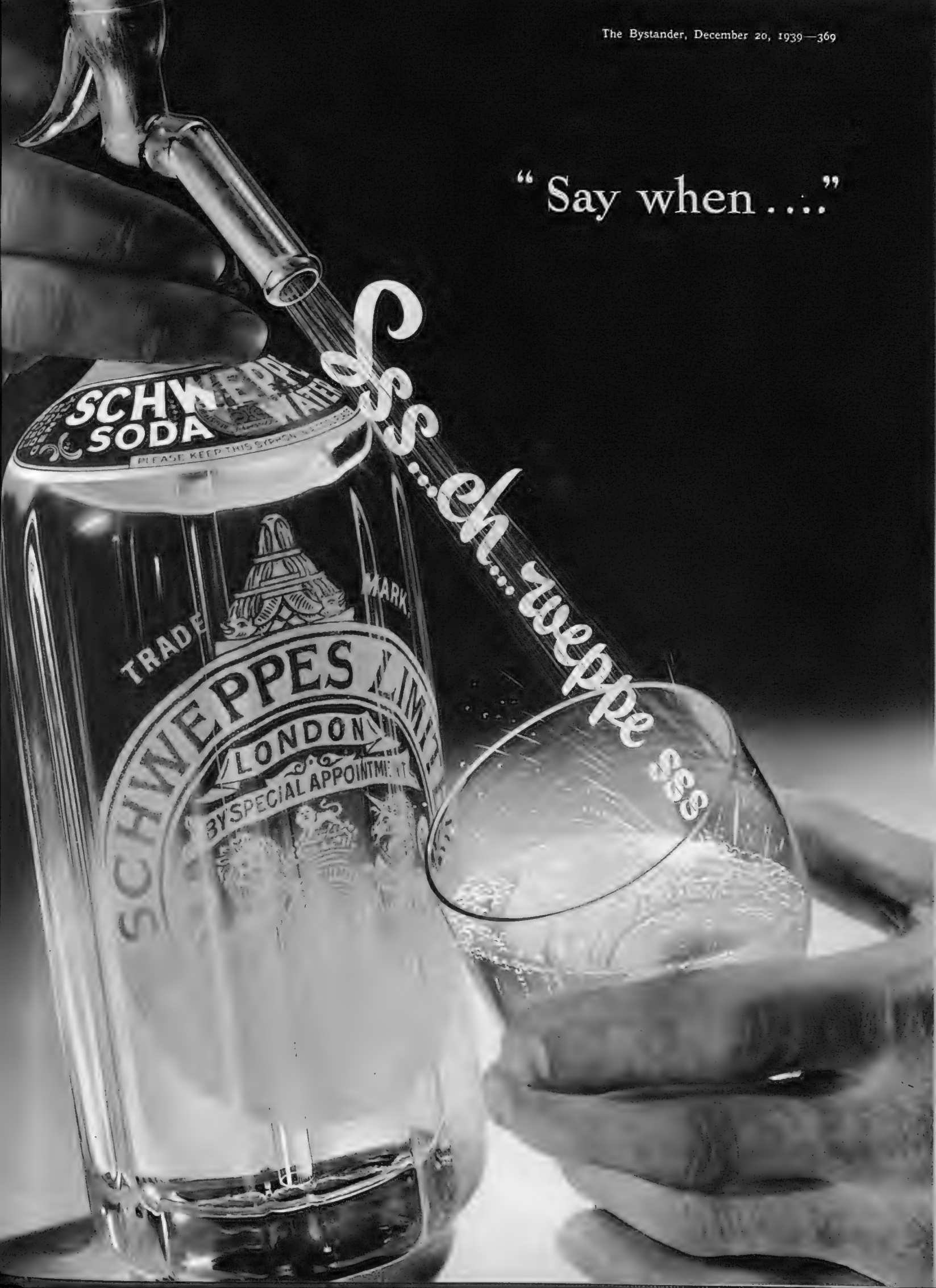
"I 'm afraid I can't, really," she said, and Prain followed her across the lawn to her car at a discreet distance.

"I 'll tell him you called," he said as he shut the door behind her. She slipped into gear and gave him an artificial smile.

"You needn't trouble!" she flung out.

Roger Blake is still entirely at a loss as to why he hasn't heard anything further from Stephanie, and has come to the conclusion that women are trickier than even he had hitherto imagined.

THE END.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Getting Married: The "Bystander's" Review of Weddings and Engagements

Pearl Freeman

Barbara Wrench

Is engaged to Capt. E. C. Croft, R.A., only son of Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Croft, of Rumleigh, Teignmouth, Devon. She is the daughter of J. M. D. Wrench, of New Delhi, and Mrs. Wrench, of the Moorings, Dartmouth, Devon, and cousin of Sir Evelyn Wrench

Pearl Freeman

Sioned Strick

Is the daughter of Capt. and Mrs. Courtenay Strick, of Rust Hall, Southgate, Swansea; announced her engagement in October to John Langford Tregoning, Hampshire Carabiniers, son of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Cecil Tregoning, of Portiscliff, Ferryside, Carmarthenshire

Lenare

Elizabeth Redmayne-Jones

Is engaged to Fl.-Lt. Frederic Lionel Newall, R.A.F., elder son of Mr. and Mrs. Lionel B. Newall, of Corton, Presteign, Radnorshire. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. E. Redmayne-Jones, late of the Chase, Rufford, and at Beachfield, Birkdale

Lenare

Daphne Stokes

Is engaged to John Michael Foxley Norris, son of the late Major J. P. Foxley Norris, and Mrs. Foxley Norris, of Gateways, Headington, Oxford, and grandson of the late Dean of Westminster. Her parents are Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Stokes, of Naunton, Severn Stoke, Worcester

Catherine Bell

Diana Evelyn Shanks

Is the elder daughter of Mrs. Edward Shanks, of 3, Trevor Square, S.W.7, and announced her engagement a month ago to John E. Martens, elder son of the late E. G. Martens, and Mrs. Martens, of Rotherby, Leicestershire

Hazel Muir-Simpson

Is the daughter of Kenneth Muir-Simpson, of Dineiddwg, Milngavie, Dumbartonshire, and the late Mrs. Muir-Simpson, and is engaged to Charles Ian Bryner Gordon, 3/8th Punjab Regt., son of the late R. B. Gordon, and Mrs. A. R. Gordon-Rudd, of 1, North Park Terrace, Glasgow

Tunbridge

Pauline Dickey

Is engaged to Sub-Lieut. George Hooper, R.N., elder son of Capt. and Mrs. L. A. Hooper, of 4, Uplands Way, Southampton. She is the daughter of Mrs. R. H. P. Addington, of Oaklands, Stakes Hill, Waterlooville, Hants., step-daughter of Major R. H. P. Addington, R.A.

Lenare

Fiona Louise Michell-Clarke

Is engaged to Sub-Lieut. James Powell, R.N.V.R., only son of Captain and Mrs. J. Powell, of Bermuda. She is the only daughter of Major A. J. Michell-Clarke, of 199, Piccadilly, W.1, and Mrs. Alexander, of 11, Eldon Road, W.

Joan Mary Palmer

Is engaged to Robert Sidney Grinling, son of the late Harry Grinling, and Mrs. Grinling, of Belwethers, Cranleigh, Surrey. She is the daughter of Capt. G. E. Palmer, and Mrs. Trevor Hame of Winton House, Ewhurst, Surrey

Hay Wrightson

Elizabeth Anley

Is the daughter of the late Brig.-Gen. F. Gore Anley, and Mrs. Anley, of Rycroft House, Bolney, Sussex. She is engaged to Capt. Thomas Peter Luckock, Somerset Light Infantry, son of Mr. and Mrs. Luckock, of Sidbrook House, near Taunton, Somerset

Bassano

Elspeth Campbell

Is the daughter of Sir Edward Campbell, Bt., M.P., and Lady Campbell, of 52, Westmoreland Rd., Bromley, Kent. Her father, made a baronet in the last Birthday Honours, is M.P. for Bromley. She is engaged to Laurie Orchard, son of E. H. Orchard, of Beckenham, Kent

Lenare

Fay Cook

Is the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. Caldwell Cook, of Little Batsford, Gerrard's Cross, Bucks. She is engaged to Peter Courtauld, younger son of Mr. and Mrs. S. A. Courtauld, of the Howe, Halstead, Essex

Navana

Mr. and Mrs. John Dowling

An Australian wedding which took place recently in London was that of Lieut. John L. Dowling, R.A.M.C., eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. V. L. Dowling, of Sydney, and Mignon Gray, younger daughter of Mrs. S. H. Ervin, of Sydney. They were married at Caxton Hall register office

Fl.-Lt. Walter Graham Southall Roberts, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., elder son of the late Dr. W. R. S. Roberts, and Mrs. Berry, of Farrs, Wimborne, Dorset, and Pamela Middleton Abel, only daughter of the late R. P. Abel, and Mrs. Abel, of Wick House, Wick St. Lawrence, Somerset, were married at Bristol on December 2nd

Stirling — Sheppard Graham

Lieut. John Buchanan Philip Stirling, R.N., son of the late Admiral A. J. B. Stirling, and Mrs. Stirling, of Dalgonar, Lymington, Hants., and Cecil Margaret Sheppard Graham, only daughter of Lieut.-Col. T. W. Sheppard Graham of Duchray, and Mrs. Sheppard Graham, of Rednock House, Port of Menteith, Perthshire, were married at the Port Kirk, Port of Menteith

Flying Officer and Mrs. White

Were married recently at Lincoln. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. White, of Douglas Gardens, Clarkstone, Glasgow. She is the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. D. C. Mackay, of Rohallion, Newlands, Glasgow

Lenare

Flight-Lt. and Mrs. W. G. S. Roberts

Prichard — Webber

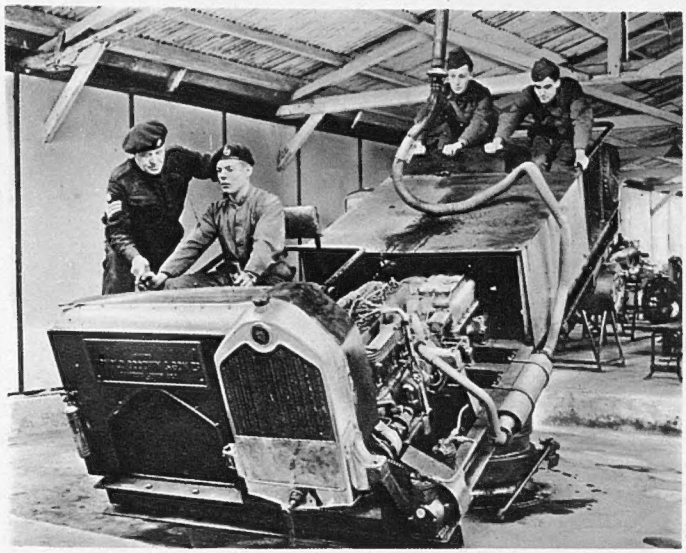
Dr. John Stobo Prichard, R.A.M.C., eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. T. Preece Prichard, of Beaconsfield, Barry, Glam., and Joan Suzanne Webber, daughter of Sir Robert and Lady Webber, of Mathern Lodge, Penlyan, Cardiff, were married at Llandaff Cathedral

Bickmore — Gurney

David Pelham Bickmore, Black Watch, only child of the late Lieut.-Col. D. F. Bickmore, and Mrs. Bickmore, of 14, Ramsay Gardens, Edinburgh, and Anne Denise Gurney, youngest daughter of the late Sir Eustace Gurney, and Lady Gurney, of Walsingham Abbey, Norfolk, were married at St. Mary and All Saints', Little Walsingham

Tabor — Acland

Peter Robert Taylor and Juliet Mary Acland, second daughter of Sir William Acland, Bt., and Lady Acland, of Barnes Wood, Welwyn, Herts., were married at St. John's, Digswell, Herts. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Tabor, of Vineyards, Welwyn, Herts.



Over she goes: *tank crews have to know how to stand a ground swell as well as men on minesweepers. . . . These three are being trained in driving and sitting tight at an Army advanced school, where an intensive course turns out recruits as efficient after 24 weeks*

Motoring Commentary

By Alan C. Hess

It is always difficult for a remote "foreigner" to form an accurate estimate of the worthiness or otherwise of an overseas organisation. Thus, in ordinary circumstances, I should know little or nothing of the Contest Board of the American Automobile Association. It so happens, however, that both Capt. George Eyston and Mr. John Cobb are personal friends of mine and I have learned from them so much of their personal experiences of the working of this body that I feel I can refer to it with some degree of authority.

From what Eyston and Cobb have told me—and, of course, their knowledge of the Contest Board's activities is more or less confined to its handling of their World's Land Speed Record runs on the Bonneville Salt Flats of Utah—there can be no question of the Board's complete competency to wield the International power with which they are entrusted in this domain. This being so, it was very disturbing recently when sinister rumours began circulating, impugning the efficiency and, in some cases, even the honesty of the officials of this Board.

You may feel that this is a matter of purely domestic American significance and that by ventilating it in this way I am concerning myself in a parochial squabble which really is no business of mine. That is very far from being the case. Great Britain is vitally interested, inasmuch as if these charges of mismanagement were to be substantiated, it might well be that protests could be lodged against the validity of the records standing to the credit of Eyston and Cobb and the A.I.A.C.R. might feel that it had no option but to declare those records invalid.

The American Automobile Association has conducted a rigorous inquiry into the suggestions made, and the Contest Board, under the chairmanship of the veteran racing driver E. V. Rickenbacker, has conducted a thorough investigation of all the facts. The result of these activities is contained in a recently published A.A.A. Contest Board Statement.

What we are deeply concerned with is the section headed Salt Bed Activities, in which five accusations are dealt with.

It is gratifying to note that in no single instance is any of these connected with the activities of any British driver, the suggestions apparently having arisen in each case out of conditions surrounding runs by Ab Jenkins. Here, briefly, are the five points dealt with in the Contest Board's Statement: It was alleged that those using the Salt Flats had been overcharged and that in a 48-hours' run by Ab Jenkins made in September 1936, $50 in one statement and $75 in another were included for hire and use of 300 night flares. The Contest Board, in order to be prepared for any emergency, had purchased 300 flares, but only 200 of them were used. About 90 were supplied to Jenkins, without cost, by the Salt Lake City Chamber of Commerce. Within an hour after the statement was rendered, the error was discovered and corrected.

Ab Jenkins also claimed that $59.75 for selecting and sealing supplies of stock grade petrol at Baltimore for shipment to the Salt Beds should have been charged to the American Oil Company. That Company stated that its agreement with Jenkins provided that this expense was to be borne by him and it was only under protest that they ultimately footed this bill. All items in connection with A.A.A. Tests are audited. Each item on each statement is approved by the Contest Board representative before payment is made. In course of a meeting in January 1937, every item queried by Jenkins was reviewed in detail. The facts were shown to be as stated and the entire matter was settled to the expressed satisfaction of Jenkins himself.

It was also suggested that Contest Board staff pay-rolls were padded by listing one person in two capacities and paying double wages. This suggestion, states the A.A.A., is entirely without foundation. No speed-run or test has ever been made when a sanctionee (*i.e.*, the hirer of the course and of the services of the A.A.A. Contest Board) or his representative was not present and fully informed as to the personnel being used. There has never been any sanctioned event where the pay-roll records were not at the full disposal of the sanctionee. On a statement for a certain run the same surname appears twice, where a father and son were both employed, each in a different capacity.

Next, objections were raised to the Contest Board bringing representatives to the Salt Beds from so far away as Los Angeles. The A.A.A. answer is that their Contest Board must insist on thoroughly reliable assistants in work of such international importance as this and dare not experiment with amateurs. Moreover, the criticism, they say, rather falls down when one consults a map and discovers that Los Angeles comes very near to being the nearest point to the Salt Beds from which experienced officials can be obtained. Mr. Jenkins is the only sanctionee who has ever objected to this practice, which has been standard for some years.

Finally, it has been stated that local civic organisations in Salt Lake City have made requests of the Contest Board which have not been given consideration. It is a fact, says the A.A.A., that when first the Salt Beds were used, there was some lack of understanding locally as to the significance of the activities, and the technical requirements in the interest of accuracy and impartiality, but this was speedily overcome to the full satisfaction of all concerned, and the civic leaders of Salt Lake City for a long while past have co-operated, and still are co-operating, with the Contest Board and all its representatives with the utmost understanding.

From what Eyston and Cobb have told me on a number of occasions, I am confident that the conduct of the Contest Board is exemplary. It is greatly to be hoped that the A.A.A.'s answers to the accusations with which they deal will as readily be accepted in America as they are on this side of the Atlantic.

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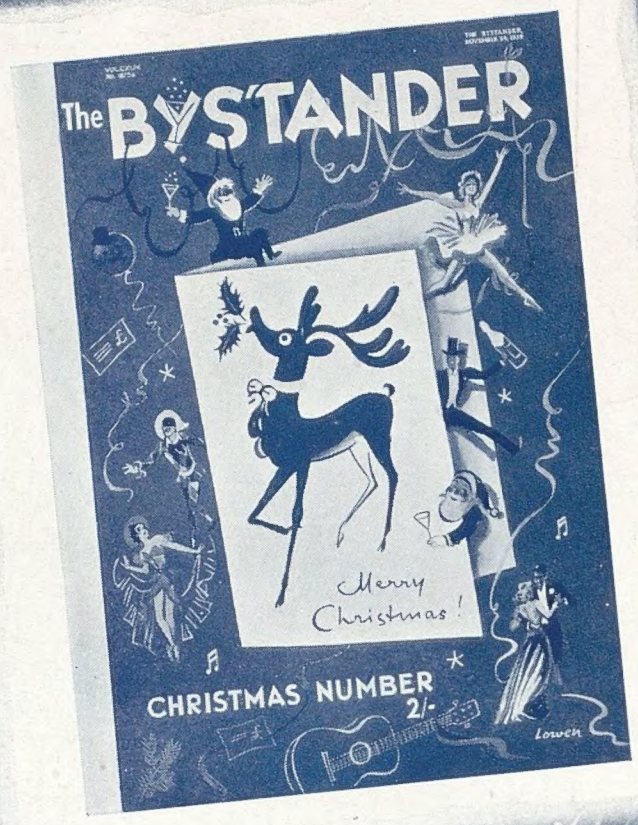

Now on SALE

The BYSTANDER CHRISTMAS NUMBER has always been full of good humour—this year it is more amusing than ever. Maurice Lane-Norcott, Nicolas Bentley, Mary Dunn, Goetz, Hewitt, Frank Ford, D'Egville, Bruce Bairnsfather, and many more, are certain to keep you chuckling. The stories are full of the Christmas spirit—here are a couple: John Collier's "Bottle Party," an amusing fantasy of a disillusioned young man who discovers a djinn—and other things in a bottle; "Poison Pen," by H. T. W. Bousfield, contains a pretty young grass widow and much malicious village gossip. The lavish colour section contains work by Doris and Anna Zinkeisen and Dame Laura Knight—names that need no introduction. Don't you think your friends—those in the Services particularly—would welcome these 88 pages of good cheer?

IT would be so unlike Christmas without THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER of THE BYSTANDER for all in the house to enjoy. The next time you visit your bookstall or regular newsagent, ask for a copy to be reserved for you . . . and we have no doubt he will gladly deliver it to your home. A heavy demand is anticipated, so we venture to suggest that you act early. If your newsagent is on the phone, why not ring him now and say:

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